

Jefferson County Jail and Sheriff's Office  
Courthouse Square  
Madison  
Jefferson County  
Indiana

HABS No. IND-84

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

## JEFFERSON COUNTY JAIL AND SHERIFF'S HOUSE

Location: On "Courthouse Square," corner of Walnut and Main Streets, Madison, Jefferson County Indiana.

USGS Madison West Quadrangle Map, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordination: 16.410110.4288500.

Present Owner: Jefferson County.

Present Occupants: Sheriff, deputies, prisoners.

Present Use: Sheriff's office and residence and county jail.

Statement of Significance: The Jefferson County Jail and Sheriff's House was built in 1848-50 and survives virtually unaltered. The temple-like form of brick and heavy masonry encloses the utilitarian jail block with the Sheriff's residence. The jail's interior plan is an impressive spatial achievement - a two-tiered block of cells surrounded by open vaulted spaces. Sturdy iron grilles at windows and cell doors concentrate patterns of detail which contrast with the large wall surfaces of quarried stone. Standing within an environment sympathetic to its architectural style, scale, and historic role as a nineteenth century penal institution, the jail's original and subsequent significance remain intact.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: June 1848-September 1850.
2. Architect: No information available.
3. Original and subsequent owners: Legal description of the property: Lot number 70, on which the jail stands, is within the original plat of the "Town of Madison." The Town was platted in 1810 and quartered by the crossing of Main and Jefferson Streets. Lots were sold in 1811 and shortly thereafter county institutions appeared at the present locations near the intersection of these two streets, the center of town. On June 12, 1812, "Lot number 69 & 70 are given for a market house and jail." Four jails have been erected on this site. The 1848 structure is the most recent.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: An exhaustive list of building supervisors, subcontractors, craftsmen and suppliers is recorded in a documentation of the jail's construction.

Two supervisors represented the Commissioners during the building's construction. Monroe W. Lee was supervisor from June 1848 until sometime after May 1849. His successor, John Kirk, is first mentioned as supervisor on December 14, 1849 and last mentioned March 19, 1850. Robert McKimm and James Falconer contracted on June 15, 1848 "for building the stone work of the jail." Other workmen included iron-workers Joseph Farnsworth, Jr., Francis Honore, and Fleming Durham, iron-smith and landscaper John Torrence, lumberman and wood-worker Abram Todd and brick layer John Kaufman.

5. Original plan and construction: Following is a detailed record of the construction of the Jail and Sheriff's House which is a valuable document to the history of nineteenth century building technology. Reference to this history is in the Commissioners' Records in the Assessor's Office, Jefferson County Courthouse.

- June 15, 1848 The Board of Commissioners contracted with Robert McKimm and James Falconer "for building the stone work of a jail . . . for eight thousand nine hundred dollars . . . which jail is to be built in strict accordance with the plan, specifications and condition of a bond executed by said McKimm & Falconer on file in the Auditor office."
- June 15, 1848 (Recorded March 1848) The contract between the Commissioners and McKimm & Falconer was altered at the request of the latter following their evidence that the stone specified in the original contract was not durable. They agreed to use "a rock . . . generally known as the Vernon Limestone, or rock from the Vernon Quarry . . ." in Jennings County, Indiana.
- June 15, 1848 Robert McKimm and James Falconer "are held and firmly bound unto Nathan Robertson, John A. Gale and John Kirk, County Commissioners of the County of Jefferson . . . and their successors in office, in the penal sum of ten thousand dollars . . . the above Robert McKimm and James Falconer have this day contracted . . . for the building of the stone work of a jail . . . on the ground where the present jail stands according to the plan and specifications on file in the Auditors office of said

county, except the same will be built under the superintendence and directions of the Commissioners of said County, and not a superintendent specially appointed for that purpose."

April 1848

Bill of specifications for County Jail: "Forty four feet by Sixty two, from out to out. The main prison to be 40 by 44 in the clear. 8 cells on the floor of main prison 6 by 8 feet in the clear, 7-1/2 feet high in the clear and 16 in number. Exterior walls of cells 2 feet thick of block work masonry. No stone less than 14 inches thick in height running through the whole width of wall, and 2 feet main width in thickness of wall from exterior to interior of cells as per plan. The main partition wall in cells 2 feet thick, with 4 flues for ventilators passing from each cell to flue as per plan or direction of Superintendent. The cross walls in cells 12 inches thick in breadth corresponding with exterior courses of stone in height, and every other stone passing through the exterior wall of cells and the binder covering to reach from angle to opening and from opening to opening . . . [three illegible words] . . . Stone in partition will be no less than 5 feet in length / or else by direction of superintendent. The main prison to be flagged. The flagging from Six to 10 inches in thickness, and the area of flagstones to be used for the same to contain not less than 12 superficial feet. The second cells floor floor of cells in cells [sic] to be of iron. The stone to be cut and rabbeted so as to secure said Iron in floor not less than 3/4 of an inch in thickness nor more than 6 inches on: the covering of upper cells to be of stone not less than 8 inches thick, three stones covering a cell, and to meet on partition wall the edge projecting over the main body of cells 1/4 inches. The Stone to be cut with reference to the hanging and fitting of said grates & doors as per direction of Superintendent. The blocks of main wall or outer wall of main cells to be drilled at joints so as to receive hooks or anchors. All the stone work of cells to be bush hammered work on each side of the cells. The stone to be drilled or cut in such a manner as to receive the lookouts and braces to support a gallery floor on the two sides of said cells main wall of prison commencing at its base 4 feet in thickness rising

3 feet and forming Squback to receive arches. Thence the wall rising 2-1/2 and 2-1/2 feet in thickness and same height. The middle walls or wall under cells having 2 squbacks. All of the above described foundation walls to be a rubble masonry. Commencing on foundation Stone or Stones not less than 4 feet long reaching across the wall not less than 10 inches in thickness Thence rising the main or outer walls of prison 2 feet thick and 24 feet high to square not less than 12 inches in thickness nor less than 3 feet in length unless directed by the Superintendent. The outer wall of main prison to have 2 openings for doors and 8 windows on the South West corner of the Plat, two cells one standing over the other 12 feet by 10-1/2 feet on the clear enclosed by wall as described in main prison. The wall rising as high as described in main prison containing 2 openings for doors & 2 for windows. The stone to be dressed to parallel thickness and width and the face to be hammered. The openings all to be drilled to receive the doors and grates as per direction of Superintendent. The stone work of gable ends rising 9 feet 2 inches, to be 16 inches thick one gable only to be bush hammered. The whole interior of area of prison to be arched and made of stone rubble masonry under flagging One arch of 12-1/2 feet span 18 inches thick the width of wall. One block of stone 4 feet square 15 inches thick built in wall, how cut through Stone from privy. All the above stone work and openings are to be built according to the plan and Specifications with 2 additional flues in the South wall not set out in the above and foregoing. The whole stone work to be laid in good lime and sand mortar for digging and walling privy to be 8 feet in the clear 12 ft. deep walled with stone 18 inches thick. To be built round and arched over as above described. All the foregoing work to be under the direct supervision and control of the superintendent who may condemn or reject any material or work not in accordance with the foregoing specifications."

December 1848

A contract between the Commissioners and "Joseph Farnsworth, Jr., Frances Honore and Fleming Durham partners trading under the name and style of Farnsworth Honore & Durham . . . agree to make and furnish all and singular the wrought iron work that may be necessary in the building and erection of the new Jail now in the Course of erection . . .

at and for the sum of eight and a half cents per pound, when finished and delivered for every pound of the aforesaid wrought iron . . . All of Said Cast and wrought iron to be made agreeably to and to correspond with the moddle [sic] which has been furnished to said Farnsworth Honore & Durham by the said Commissioners . . . [They] further agree to have all said work done by the first day of March A.D. 1849. And it is further agreed . . . that all the foregoing Iron work is to be under the supervision of and direction of Monroe W. Lee and in accordance to said Lee's direction . . . [It] is further understood that the said parties of the first part are not to furnish the sheet iron work for the roof of said jail."

- February 1849 "The sum of 500 dollars and fifty dollars . . . [is] to be paid to Farnsworth, Honore & Durham for making iron work of jail."
- February 1849 "W. R. Davidson for tin and stove work & etc. done in jail as per bill \$4.62."
- April 1849 A contract was sealed between the Commissioners and Monroe W. Lee "for doing the Carpenters work for the jailors house which is about to be erected for said county." Also, "that Monroe W. Lee be and he is hereby appointed an agent of the Board to contract for the lumber & C. necessary for the building of a Jailors house . . . for the county jail."
- June 15, 1849 The board ordered McKimm and Falconer to "make the walls of the new jail . . . one course of stone higher than is contemplated in the original contract . . . "
- September -  
October 1849 On September 8, 1849 the commissioners recorded that "the new jail is not yet in a fit state for the reception of prisoners." On October 2 the "Madison Daily Courier" reported that the "new jail about completed."

Finally, on October 27, the commissioners recorded that "the jail be now received as completed according to the contract as per bill made with Robert McKimm and James Falconer."

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December 1849 Late into 1849, work continued on the Sheriff's house. During the first two weeks of December the following suppliers and sub-contractors were paid:

John Taylor, Blacksmith, for articles furnished.....	\$ 22.30
A. Todd for lumber furnished for new jail..	149.09
R. M. Lea for extra work done in and about the new jail and jailors house.....	54.00
James Falconer for window sills and door... sills. (Lintels and sills are of stone in Sheriff's house).	76.56
Patrick Dillon, part bill for Brick.....	112.10
John Kirk, superintending . . . buildings of jail.....	300.00

March 9, 1850 Two payments for the glazing of the Sheriff's office were recorded on this date: "F. E. Suise, for glass for New Jailors house \$18.25; Harpier & Co. for same \$14.47."

March 13, 1850 Further stone work was requested for the jail. The following can refer only to an arch to support the roof structure. The contract is in McKimm's words: "I propose to furnish the materials and arch over the areas of the jail lately erected in said county the arch to be 18 inches thick of Rubal range work to be done in a workmanlike manner, the courses to be from four to ten inches thick and also to build up two feet on top of the cells with rubal masonry all for the sum of six hundred and fifty dollars to be paid when the work is completed."

March 15, 1850 Samuel Abbott and Daniel Knisell were bonded for the "performance of certain labor in the new Jailors house . . . in the penal sum of one thousand dollars."

As the other bills suggest, most of the structure is in place. The work of Abbott and Knisell, therefore must be on the roof. Other references to them in the Commissioner's records do not confirm this however.

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March 19, 1850 A number of payments "for labor and material on the new jail" are recorded on March 20th.

James Falconer [stone]	\$900.00
Patrick Dillon [brick]	700.00
John A. Coffman [bricklayer]	207.00
H. B. Davidson [tin & stove]	250.00
Reed, Duback & Matthews	200.00
Abram Todd [lumber]	111.80
Knisell & Abbott	38.75
John Torrence [locks]	49.00
John Kirk [superintendent]	150.00

September 10, 1850 A payment to William Fitton was recorded "for painting Jail and Sheriff's House as per bill \$451.47.

September 13, 1850 Torrence was paid \$25.00 "for part of bill rendered for locks at jail."

December 5 1850 A bill is paid to unknown person for "hauling dirt and leveling in front yard before Jail \$2.50."

6. Alterations and additions: The building has survived with little alteration to the original fabric other than the addition of mechanical conveniences: electric wiring, plumbing and central hot air heating. The addition of a kitchen wing in 1857 by Matthew Temperly was the single major alteration.

The yard surrounding the jail passed through a number of changes. In 1858 an iron fence on a marble base was erected, enclosing the Courthouse and Jail. Only the marble base remains.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

The Jail and Sheriff's House is an integral part of the Courthouse Square. The development of this area was a long and arduous process, spanning fifty years. This was due primarily to the encroachment of private building. An interesting commentary in the "Madison Daily Courier" on May 22, 1850 refers to the advantages of the destruction of the prosperous residential neighborhood known as "Lawyers' Block:"



"The removal of the old 'Lawyers' Block,' in front of the new jail on Main Cross Street, is progressing, and the front of the jail is now almost exposed to view from the street. It seems somewhat paradoxical to say that the view of a jail, even if it be a new one, is an ornament to the city, however after the old buildings have been removed, the front of the new building finished, and the yard between the buildings and the street decorated with shrubbery etc., we hope to be able to say that the new jail is an ornament to the city - particularly as the grated windows are in the rear of the Sheriff's house. The new jail looks better than the Lawyers' Block, or the indifferent and insecure offices down the street."

The first county jail, erected in 1811, was built of logs. It was located on the alley at the rear of the present structure. In 1817, a two-story log jail, 22' by 24', was built for \$800. Circa 1830 the third jail was built by James H. Wallace on a \$2,700 contract and constructed of brick. It was the only jail of the five not to be located on the Courthouse Square. The fourth jail was erected in 1835. Constructed of brick, this building was a combination of a sheriff's house and jail in one structure. The builders were Edwin Peck and Matthew Temperly. C.P.J. Arion supervised the construction. The jail was "two stories high, fronting on an alley with cells in either story and rooms for the jailor on the south." The fifth jail, the subject of this report, survives today.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: Early photograph of the Jail from the northeast, n.d. Madison and Jefferson County Public Library, Madison, Indiana.

Original ink and wash drawing of Courthouse, 1854. Shows Jail and surroundings. Unsigned but accompanied by an award to David Duback, architect of the Courthouse. Records Office, Jefferson County Courthouse, Madison, Indiana.

2. Bibliography:

- a. Primary and unpublished sources:

County Commissioners Records Vol. I and J, Assessor's Office, Jefferson County Courthouse, Madison, Indiana.

Interview: Neal Hammon, architect, Lexington, Kentucky.

"Items from Early Newspapers of Jefferson County, Indiana, 1817-1886," typescript, Madison and Jefferson County Library.

"Madison Daily Courier, May 22, 1850; December 7, 1852; June 6, 1911."

"Original Plat Book 1-A (of the city of Madison)," Records Office, Jefferson County Courthouse, Madison, Indiana.

3. Secondary and published sources:

Biographical and Historical Souvenir For The Counties Clark, Crawford, Harrison, Floyd, Jefferson, Jennings, Scott and Washington, Indiana. Chicago: John M. Gresham & Company, 1889.

Woolen, William Wesley, Biographical and Historical Sketches of Early Indiana. Indianapolis, 1883.

Prepared by Philip Dole  
Team Historian  
Historic American  
Buildings Survey  
Summer 1971

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This mid-nineteenth century civic structure, designed in the Greek Revival manner, is five-bayed, symmetrical with a large pilaster recessed entrance and pedimented front gable. Housing both the Sheriff's residence and the county jail, the building is noteworthy because of the organization of interior space and a significant component within the Courthouse Square.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over all dimensions: Rectangular, two-story portion is 44' x 88'-4" and the one-story kitchen wing on the east side is 24'-10" x 28'-6".
2. Foundations: Cellar walls under the front portions are rubble stonework, 16" thick. A watertable course of cut stone around the entire structure is 14" to 24" above the grade. Footings under the jail-block walls are stone blocks, 4' wide at a depth of 5'-6" and 2'-6" wide at the ground level.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: The walls of the jail house are of light cream limestone, taken from the Vernon, Indiana quarries. Exterior walls of the cell block are 24" thick. Thruwall blocks are 17" to 22" high and 51" to 64" long, laid in lime mortar. Exterior walls are of stone or brick, stuccoed, and have a smooth hammered finish. The 20" cornice above the stone block is of cut stone; the cornice above the brick block is constructed of wood.
4. Structural system, framing: The walls are stone and brick bearing throughout. The residence has wood floor framing; exposed joists in the cellar are full 2" x 11 1/2". The attic space is sealed off, but the roof framing is doubtless of wood.

The 18" thick perimeter space around the cell block is covered half-barrel vaults of rubble masonry, plastered on the under side. The floors of the upper cells are 3/4" iron plates, and the ceiling of these cells are stone slabs 8" thick and covered with a 24" thickness of grouted rubble masonry.

5. Porches: The main entrance stoop and steps are of slabbed cut stone. A wood-framed screen porch is on the south facade of the kitchen wing.
6. Chimneys: Only the chimney on the east wall of the kitchen wing is still functional. This chimney, and one on the main structure rise above the roof 8' to 9'. Five other brick chimneys have been reduced to 18".

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance is recessed and has a four-paneled door, 3'-4" x 9', side-lights and framed by pilasters and classical detail.
- b. Windows: Those on the residence and kitchen wing are double-hung sash with six-over-six lights, stone sills, and usually stone lintels. These windows have exterior shutters and the hinges are still discernable. The upper windows of the jail have grid-pattern fixed grilles; they are made of wrought-iron straps.

8. Roof: The roof is gabled on the north facade, and hipped on the south end, with a pitch of 4 1/2 in 12. The kitchen wing is gabled and has a similar pitch. All roofs are covered with a composition shingle.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: A cellar under the residence has walls of rubble masonry, lightly plastered. A recently laid floor is of concrete. An oil-fired furnace stands in the east end.
- b. First floor: The north (central) entrance leads to the stone-walled jail vestibule, continuing in to the jail area. This space has a high-vaulted outer area and a two-story cell block with eight cells on each level. Access to the women's cells is also from the vestibule.
- c. Second floor: The central staircase leads to one bedroom and large bathroom on the west side, and three bedrooms on the east.
- d. Attic: A steep stair to the attic from the second floor stairhall is now blocked off. The large voluminous space between the jail's stone vaulting and the roof above (18" rubble stone vaulting with 24" rubble masonry above that) is also sealed.

2. Stairways: The stairway in the front portion is an open well with turned spindles and a handrail that forms a graceful spiral to meet the newel post. The stair rises 14 steps to the landing then 5 to the second floor.

Wooden floors on each of the two levels inside the jail section lead to the women's cells. Two iron-framed stairs in the main cell area lead to upper catwalks. The catwalk's railings are formed of wrought-iron bars, the floor is of iron plate, 1/2" thick.

3. Flooring: Wood flooring of random width is used in the residence and some rooms are covered with linoleum. The original stone flagging in the jail section is covered with a cement finish.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: All walls and ceilings in the Sheriff's house are plaster on wood lathe. The jail's stone walls have a bush-hammered finish. The ceilings of the women's cells are plaster on wood lathe also.
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5. Doorways and doors: Door trim has pedimented heads. Doors are paneled throughout the front portion of the building. The massive entry door to the jail block and the cell doors are built of heavy wrought iron and riveted iron straps form a lattice pattern. The lower portion of the cell doors is solid plate with a food pass-through at the floor; the upper latticed portion may be tightly closed with a hinged iron plate closure.
6. Hardware: The massive locks, padlocks, keys and chain of the jail entry door and cell doors have been well-preserved, and the locks can still be used. In several cells the iron rings attached to the wall near the floor shackled the prisoners.
7. Mechanical equipment:
  - a. Heating: Most of the fireplaces in the residence have been blocked up, and only one on the second floor has a coal grate. The iron stoves in the jail, one on each side, were on raised stone blocks, and one is still in place. The jail is now heated with a space heater, piped through the basement hot water furnace.

Lighting: The entire structure is wired for electric lighting.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The building is located on the eastern portion of the area known as "Courthouse Square." Lying eastward of the Jefferson County Courthouse, the building faces northward on Main Street. An alley and parking lot are to the rear, and the area to the north and east is attractively landscaped with walks and shade trees. The Jail and Sheriff's House lie 38°44'10" N latitude and 85°22'34" W longitude.
2. Landscaping: Tree-lined lawn. No formal landscaping.
3. Outbuildings: None.

Prepared by Melvin M. Rotsch  
Project Supervisor  
Historic American  
Buildings Survey  
Summer 1971

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana and Historic Madison. The structure was measured and drawn in the summer of 1971 under the direction of James C. Massey, Chief of HABS, and Melvin M. Rotsch (Architect, Texas A & M University), Project Supervisor, Bruce E. Lunch (Washington University), H. T. Moriarity (University of Texas), and John M. Szubaski (Princeton University), and architectural historian Philip Dole (University of Oregon), at the HABS Field Office in Madison, Indiana. The data was edited in HABS office by staff historian Jan E. Cigliano in November 1978. Photographs were taken by HABS staff photographer Jack E. Boucher in 1971.